562 clothing and dressed her in valuable furs, especially in part of the
556 pelt of a striped antelope called mpangé. In some villages she was permitted to wear leopardskin in front as well as in back.

Then the father would decree (-lɛkya) that since his daughter had become boliɔmbɛ she would always wear furs and would stop working, and that she would be given in marriage only to a very rich and influential man, not to the first comer. Therefore, a synonym for boliɔmbɛ is bɔna ɔ̀ bɔ́kɔ, "child of the decree, a child set apart, forbidden."

This ceremony may be held regardless of the child's age, at any time between three years and adolescence.

When the ceremony is ended the girl withdraws (-ɔlama, transitive -ɔ́ɔ) into a hut specially prepared for this occasion, which is called lɔ́kɔ. Her seclusion lasts only a few months. When certain natural needs oblige her to leave the house, she goes out the back way through the banana grove and hides as much of herself as possible under a mat. She does not walk on the bare ground; her feet must not [285] touch the earth. That is why mats are spread everywhere she steps. She does no work; her food is prepared by her mother, sister, aunt, etc., or by a slave. When it comes to her toilette, she washes her hands not in water, but in palm oil. [21] All these practices are marks of respect and honor.

When the period of seclusion is ended, the girl's father gives a second feast, with dances, drinks, etc., and the boliɔmbɛ comes out walking on mats. But there is no further ceremony. From then on the girl is no different from other girls. But she retains the sign of her distinction, the wearing of furs, and she does no housework.

562 The marriage of a boliɔmbɛ always occurred very late, since a
559 man who wanted to take her for his wife had to collect a good deal of wealth before he could take the risk of asking for her hand. Should his attempt prove fruitless, he was exposed to ridicule in the whole region.

184 Among the tribes living on the left bank of the Lulaka any
556 man who was rich and of good family could ask for the hand of a
562 boliɔmbɛ in marriage. Among the Inɔ́lɔ́, on the other hand, the re-
562 quirements were more complicated. The suitor had to belong to another tribe or group. For instance, a girl who belonged to the